

Scrutinising the Co-operation Agreement: two years on Research Briefing

December 2023



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Research Briefing

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Editor:

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The Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister is holding a session on **8 December 2023** with the First Minister, Mark Drakeford MS, and Plaid Cymru Leader, Rhun ap Iorwerth MS, regarding progress in delivering the **Co-operation Agreement**. This briefing sets out some of the key issues the Committee may cover.



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1. Introduction

The Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister is holding a session on **8 December 2023** with the First Minister, Mark Drakeford MS, and Plaid Cymru Leader, Rhun ap Iorwerth MS, regarding progress in delivering the **Co-operation Agreement** (“the Agreement”). This follows previous sessions on **9 December 2022** and **24 March 2023** held by the Committee with the First Minister and former Plaid Cymru Leader, Adam Price MS.

The Co-operation Agreement was published in December 2021 by the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru, and contains 46 commitments. This briefing doesn’t cover each of these but focuses on key issues which the Committee may cover.

The Welsh Government has published a **2022-23 annual report** on progress with the Co-operation Agreement. However, this was not available prior to preparing the briefing for the Committee and the two documents should be read alongside each other.

The Committee’s session can be watched live, or afterwards, on **SeneddTV**. A **transcript** will be available a few days afterwards.

2. Background on the Agreement

The **Co-operation Agreement** was published by the First Minister and the then Leader of Plaid Cymru, Adam Price MS, on **1 December 2021**. Its stated objective is to deliver on defined commitments, based on areas of common interest and shared values, over a three year period.

There are 46 commitments structured around four cross-cutting themes (numbers in brackets denote the number of commitments under that theme):

- Radical action in testing times (11);
- A greener Wales to tackle climate and change and the nature emergency (10);
- Reforming the foundations of Wales (12);
- Creating a united and fairer Wales for all (13).

In December 2022, the Welsh Government published an **annual report on the Co-operation Agreement 2021-2022**. This summarised action under the four themes and covered most but not all of the 46 commitments. The First Minister emphasised to the Committee on **23 March** the three-year nature of the

programme and that therefore not everything had been actioned and reported on in the first year.

The Welsh Government published the **2022-23 annual report** on 1 December. Although it wasn't available prior to writing this briefing, it can be seen that the 2022-23 report includes an update on 43 of the 46 commitments. The three commitments, for which there is no information, are:

- set up an expert group to support [the Welsh Government's and Plaid Cymru's] shared ambition to create a National Care Service and agree an implementation plan by the end of 2023;
- establish "Unnos", a national construction company to support councils and social landlords to improve the supply of social and affordable housing; and
- ongoing work to provide "sustainable public services".

Many of the Co-operation Agreement commitments are directly reflected in the **Programme for Government (PfG)**. The Welsh Government published an **annual report** on progress against PfG commitments in July 2023. Senedd Research published a **series of articles on the PfG** in September 2023.

Mechanisms for delivery and scrutiny

At the time of making the Agreement (December 2021), the Welsh Government published a **"mechanisms" document**, setting out how it would work with Plaid Cymru.

It explains the roles of the two **"Designated Members"** (Sian Gwenllian MS and Cefin Campbell MS) and sets a Code of Conduct for them, which is based on the Ministerial Code. It also provides information about a "Joint Oversight Board", and clarifies civil service support. The document confirms that overall accountability for the Co-operation Agreement rests with the First Minister and the Leader of Plaid Cymru.

The Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru have **committed** to "effective and timely communication with each other", with a "joint aim of a 'no surprises' relationship in relation to statements and comments on the Co-operation Agreement".

Some Members of the Senedd have **questioned** how the Senedd can effectively scrutinise both parties to the Co-operation Agreement, particularly the Designated Members. The Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister has held two previous sessions (on **9 December 2022** and **24 March 2023**) to scrutinise the First

Minister and the Leader of Plaid Cymru on the Co-operation Agreement and this is therefore the third such occasion. In June 2023, the Llywydd issued **additional guidance on the operation of Plenary proceedings during the Co-operation Agreement** to reflect the position of Plaid Cymru.

Budget implications and monitoring

The “mechanisms” document states that a three-year budget cycle underpins the Co-operation Agreement. This period is 2022-2023, 2023-24 and 2024-25, which is the duration of the three-year Spending Review period the Welsh Government set out at the time of the **2022-23 budget**.

A **joint paper from the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru in March 2023 on the Final Budget 2023-24** said that the 2022-25 Spending Review period set out funding for 13 specific areas within the Co-operation Agreement. Despite being **referred to by the Minister for Finance and Local Government in January 2022**, it is not clear which these 13 areas are. In its scrutiny of the 2022-23 Draft Budget in January 2022, the **Finance Committee previously asked** the Welsh Government to provide information on these 13 areas. Despite **agreeing to do so**, the Welsh Government has not yet provided this.

The joint paper said that the Welsh Government undertook a reprioritisation exercise as part of preparations for the 2023-2024 Draft Budget, seeking to:

...release money from portfolios to reallocate funding to address pressures on public services, protect the Programme for Government – of which the Co-operation Agreement forms a key part – and help mitigate the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis.

It added that protection was given to the 46 commitments of the shared policy programme of the Co-operation Agreement during this process, resulting in the funding allocations for the 13 specific areas identified in the 2022 to 2025 Spending Review being protected. They were not subject to reprioritisation, reductions in funding or a revised delivery profile, unlike other areas of activity.

The joint paper also stated that, in addition to the ongoing pressure of public sector pay, the following areas had been noted as priority areas for Plaid Cymru in 2023-24 for discussion in the event of any further consequential from the UK government:

- Increase in Educational Maintenance Allowance;
- Extending eligibility to Free School Meals in secondary schools;
- Extending the Bus Emergency Scheme (BES).

According to the paper, a series of bilateral meetings between individual ministers and Designated Members explored individual portfolio budgets and ensured that the commitments within the Co-operation Agreement were on track and that the appropriate funding and resources were in place to deliver the shared policy programme. It went on to say “we will continue to monitor these closely as part of regular bilateral meetings in addition to the Joint Policy Committees and Joint Oversight Board”.

The Welsh Government is due to publish the 2024-25 Draft Budget on 19 December. It has already **said the devolved Welsh budget is under “unprecedented pressure”** and has **taken money from some 2023-24 budgets in-year** to provide money needed for the NHS and Transport for Wales.

3. Homelessness

Commitment: End homelessness – If people are made homeless it should be brief, rare and unrepeated. We will reform housing law, enact the Renting Homes Act to give renters greater security and implement the Homeless Action Group recommendations.

The Welsh Government is currently consulting on a **Ending Homelessness White Paper**, setting out legislative reforms with the aim of ending homelessness.

The White Paper proposals are not yet fully costed. The **draft Regulatory Impact Assessment** (RIA) states that “we expect that implementation of the reforms will require significant investment” and that future versions of the RIA will provide more detail.

The Housing Support Grant (HSG) is the Welsh Government’s principal funding stream for preventing homelessness and supporting independent living. **Research conducted by Cardiff Metropolitan University** found that every £1 invested in HSG services delivers £1.40 net savings to public services in Wales.

The Welsh Government uplifted the **HSG allocation** in 2021-22 from £127 million to £167 million. It remained at £167 million in 2022-23 and 2023-24, and remains the same in the indicative draft budget for 2024-25.

Cymorth Cymru and Community Housing Cymru have conducted a **survey** which found that 75% of housing support providers are running at a deficit, and 77% are likely to reduce service capacity if the HSG remains frozen in 2024-25. The

organisations argue that the allocation freeze amounts to a £24 million cut in real terms since 2011-12.

The **Minister for Climate Change, Julie James MS, told the Local Government and Housing Committee** during general scrutiny on 9 November 2023:

I really would have loved to have put more money into the Housing Support Grant. This is of absolutely no comfort to anyone in the sector, but it was quite a struggle to keep the uplift that we had put in. We put quite a considerable uplift in the year before, and, frankly, I had to sharpen my elbows quite vigorously in order to keep the uplift.

4. Local tourism levy

Commitment: Local tourism levies – Introduce local tourism levies using local government finance reform legislation.

The Welsh Government **has consulted** on proposals to introduce a discretionary levy on overnight visitors to “provide a means to generate revenue for local authorities to invest into local services and infrastructure which is integral to the visitor experience”. The Welsh Government’s view is that this would recognise the impact visitors have in some areas of Wales and “provide a more equitable basis for the funding of local services and infrastructure between residents and visitors”.

The **analysis of the consultation responses** shows that 78% of respondents “disagreed that local authorities should have discretionary visitor levy powers to enable a more equitable basis for the funding of local services and infrastructure between residents and visitors”. The analysis also showed that “most of the respondents who elaborated on the reasons behind their view on this question focused on the local or central aspect of implementation, rather than the implementation [principle] of the levy itself”.

The Welsh Government also **commissioned a survey** (held in January 2023) to understand the views of Welsh residents and UK consumers of domestic holidays on the proposed levy. 2,558 respondents completed the survey, of whom 1,005 live in Wales. Key findings included:

When introduced to the concept of a ‘visitor levy’ in a place where they go on holiday or in their area, the UK public were more positive than negative – 45% were positive, and 25% were negative...

...Although reactions were more positive than negative, it's important to note that when the visitor levy was turned from an abstract commitment (i.e. for tourists to contribute to tourism areas) to a tangible concept (an actual visitor levy in areas they visit or live in), negativity does increase, and for some respondents, negativity was visceral.

5. Social care

Commitment: Future of Social Care – Set up an expert group to support shared ambition to create a National Care Service, free at point of need, continuing as a public service. Agree on implementation plan by end of 2023.

We will continue to better integrate health and care and work towards parity of recognition and reward for social care and health workers.

[There is no update in the Co-operation Agreement 2022-23 annual report on this commitment,]

National Care Service

The First Minister and the then Plaid Cymru Leader, Adam Price MS previously told the **Committee in March 2023** that the context and fiscal environment had altered very significantly, and this had inevitably impacted upon the way the proposals for a National Care Service (free at the point of need) could be taken forward.

The First Minister said the Cabinet had agreed to the preparation of the next phase of implementation, including “options relating to paying and funding for social care—the revival of the Holtham work”. Adam Price MS said “we’ll be able to share more in due course, when we’ve come to some interim conclusions at least in terms of the revenue side of the equation”.

The Deputy Minister for Social Services said in a **written statement on 27 November** that “over the coming weeks we intend to publish an initial Implementation plan”.

Parity between health and social care staff

Severe staffing shortages continue in social care and the **Deputy Minister for Social Services told the Health and Social Care Committee** in November 2023 that low pay is still one of the reasons for this, along with the lack of parity with healthcare staff:

The difference between somebody who's working in social care as a care assistant and somebody working in the NHS as a care assistant, I think, is £3,000 in terms of pay at the moment. I would like to see that brought down, but, obviously, we're in a very difficult financial situation, as we've discussed at length in this meeting this morning. So, I can't see when that could be done, but, yes, I think they're doing very much the same job, and in order to bring real parity and esteem to the social care sector, they should be treated in the same way as in the NHS.

6. Broadcasting

Commitment: Broadcasting – Explore creation of a shadow Broadcasting and Communications Authority for Wales.

For many years the Welsh Government did not support the devolution of broadcasting, which is reserved to Westminster. In 2021, the previous Senedd's Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee **called for** further powers over broadcasting to be devolved to Wales, including a formal role in setting the licence fee, and responsibility for Welsh language broadcaster S4C. It did not recommend the wholesale devolution of broadcasting.

In its response to the Committee's report, **the Welsh Government said**:

It remains the Welsh Government's view that broadcasting or elements of broadcasting should not be devolved. There could be significant financial risks to devolving these powers to Wales, with no guarantee that budgets would be transferred as well.

This position changed with the **Co-operation Agreement**. The policy programme, which accompanied the Agreement, says that:

Plaid Cymru and the Welsh Government agree that broadcasting and communications powers should be devolved to the Senedd.

In August 2023 the Welsh Government published a report, **A new future for broadcasting and communications in Wales**, by an expert panel. The panel, chaired by broadcaster Mel Doel and Professor Elin Haf Gruffydd Jones, was

established in June 2022 to take forward a Co-operation Agreement commitment to “explore the creation of a shadow Broadcasting and Communications Authority for Wales”.

The panel concluded that the sector:

...needs an independent body of expertise – a Shadow Broadcasting and Communications Authority – to increase transparency and visibility at a Welsh level.

The **Welsh Government’s paper** to the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee on the 2023-24 Draft Budget said:

In 2023-24 an annual budget of £1m for broadcasting and £100,000 for journalism has been set aside, as set out in the Co-operation Agreement budget. The broadcasting budget will support the ongoing activity of the Expert Panel on the Establishment of a Shadow Broadcasting and Communications Authority for Wales, including ongoing research activity and spend aligned to its recommendations which will be received in 2023.

While the official line remains that a decision on implementing the report’s recommendations has not been taken, the **BBC reported in September 2023** that the Welsh Government would not establish a Shadow Broadcasting Authority.

7. Free school meals and childcare

(Focusing on underspends in budgets for these two key commitments)

Commitment: Free school meals – Extend free school meals to all primary school pupils, over the lifetime of this agreement.

Commitment: Childcare – Expand free childcare to all two-year olds with focus on providing and strengthening Welsh-medium childcare.

Universal free school meals in primary schools

The **Welsh Government says** all primary school children in Wales will get free school meals by 2024. The precise timescale is not clear, i.e. whether that means January 2024, July 2024 or December 2024.

In implementing the policy, the Welsh Government has focused on younger primary school children first. Some pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 started receiving them in September 2022 and the **Minister for Education and Welsh**

Language said at that time the majority would do so from April 2023. He also said free school meals would be extended to all other primary school years from September 2023. The exact time profile for providing free school meals to all pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, across all local authorities, is unclear.

Budget provision

At the start of the **current three-year spending period** (2022-23 to 2024-25), the Welsh Government allocated £200 million over three years to implement the policy: £40 million in 2022-23, £70 million in 2023-24 and £90 million in 2024-25. The 2022-23 budget had a projected underspend and £11 million was used to continue free school meals during holiday periods for Christmas 2022 and February 2023 (see Excel Note 41 of the **Local Government Settlement 2023-24**).

There is again an underspend in 2023-24 and £11.5 million was taken from the budget as part of the savings needed to finance additional spend for the NHS and Transport for Wales (announced in **October 2023**).

The Welsh Government said, on both occasions, there was no impact from the reduction in funding on delivery of the programme (2022-23: Minister for Education and Skills in **CYPE Committee in January 2023**, 2023-24: **Welsh Government Update on 2023-2024 financial position** in October 2023.)

Plaid Cymru said when Adam Price was Leader that it **wanted to extend** universal provision further to secondary school pupils by April 2027, although this is not in the Co-operation Agreement. It was reflected in the three areas identified in the **March 2023 joint paper** as a priority for Plaid Cymru in the event of any future available funding.

Childcare

UK wide, there have been significant increases in eligibility for free pre-school childcare in recent years. The Co-operation Agreement commitment to “expand free childcare to all two-year olds with focus on providing and strengthening Welsh-medium childcare” was restated in the updated **Programme for Government** in December 2021.

The Welsh Government’s **Childcare Offer** means that from 2019 most working parents have been eligible for 30 hours per week free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds for 48 weeks per year. Its stated **main purpose** is “helping parents, particularly mothers, to return to work or increase the hours they work”. This 30 hours is

made up of a combination of 10 hours early years education coupled with a 20 hour childcare entitlement. Eligibility has recently expanded to some parents in education and training.

The **Flying Start** programme is separate and since 2007 has provided free childcare for parents of 2-3 year olds for 2.5 hours per day, 5 days a week in the areas of Wales assessed as 'most deprived'. As part of the **Co-operation Agreement**, the childcare element of Flying Start is being expanded. The aim is to provide this for all 2 year olds and the expansion is **being delivered in phases**, with the first phase from 2022, and the **second phase continuing** through 2023-24 and 2024-25.

The Welsh Government **accepted in principle** a recommendation from the Equality and Social Justice Committee report, **Minding the future - the childcare barrier facing working parents** (January 2022), about the need to "improve awareness and understanding of the childcare support available to new parents".

Childcare funding

In its **2023 Programme for Government annual report**, the Welsh Government said:

We have expanded access to all four elements of the early years Flying Start programme, benefitting over 3,100 children and we have provided £46m to support the expansion of Flying Start childcare. We have also provided £70m to make improvements and undertake essential maintenance of childcare settings and £3.8m to support more childcare providers to improve their Welsh-language provision.

In October, the **Welsh Government said**:

We are releasing £16.1 million from the budgets supporting Early Years, Childcare and Play activities. The majority of this funding has been released as a result of updated forecasts on take up of the Childcare Offer for Wales.

8. Educational standards

Commitments: There are a number of commitments in the Co-operation Agreement relating to compulsory school age education, including reform of the school year; reforming qualifications; supply teaching; the Seren Network; Welsh language education and Welsh history in the curriculum.

It is not clear whether or how the education-related commitments in the Co-operation Agreement will directly support the Welsh Government's long standing "**national mission**" to narrow educational inequalities and raise school standards.

The latest **Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results** were published on Tuesday 5 December. They showed that Wales' scores have fallen further behind the rest of the UK and the international average.

In 2015, the Welsh Government set a **target** for Wales to reach 500 points in each of the three domains – Reading, Mathematics and Science – by the 2021 cycle of PISA. The Minister for Education and Welsh Language's **response to a written question** in November 2022 revealed this was no longer a target. In any case, Wales' scores in the 2022 cycle (postponed from 2021 due to the pandemic) fell short of what was previously the target.

Other measures, beyond PISA, show the challenges the Welsh Government's national mission faces. Whilst changes to performance measures & the suspension of exams during the pandemic limit comparisons between years, the GCSE deprivation **attainment gap between deprived pupils and their peers widened** between 2016 & 2022. The **2023 GCSE data** was published on 7 December. We wrote about the initial data available on the 2023 **GCSE** and **A level** results when they were released in August.

Data on the personalised assessments taken by pupils in Years 2 to 9 in Reading and Numeracy also shows a downward trend, coinciding with the pandemic. In 2022/23, pupils had declined by an average of 11 months in reading Welsh and 4 months in reading English, compared to pupils of the same age in 2020/21. The decline was 4 months on average in Numeracy (procedural) compared to 2018/19, while attainment was the equivalent of 6 months higher in Numeracy (reasoning) than in 2021/22.

The Welsh Government has as one of its **Programme for Government well-being objectives**, “Continue our long-term programme of education reform, and ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise”.

9. Public transport

Commitment: Public transport – Ask Transport for Wales (TfW) to explore development of transport links between North and South Wales, including how to protect potential travel corridors on the west coast of Wales. Continue to work with local authorities in North West Wales and Welsh Government to develop plans for integrated transport system.

There have long been calls to reopen north-south railway lines within Wales. In 2018, the Welsh Government published **a feasibility study** which explored the costs and benefits of reinstating the Aberystwyth-Carmarthen line. It estimated a total cost of £775 million in 2017 prices.

TrawsCymru bus services currently provide north-south long distance connectivity.

In a **2021 blog post**, TfW said the absence of a north-south internal Welsh rail link “comes down to the geography and history of the nation”. It said reinstating former mid and west Wales rail routes would not be suitable for intercity services “because their meandering nature would mean journey times would be far longer than via the current route”. Additionally, former track beds have been redeveloped making rebuilding “almost impossible”.

The **Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee** scrutinised TfW on 22 November. **TfW’s paper** for that meeting included an update on its work on a West Wales Corridor Innovation Study. It described this as a “wide-ranging assessment to examine how accessibility and connectivity can be improved on the west coast of Wales”. It said:

The study has recommended that in the short – medium term proposals for limited stop bus services are developed as these could be delivered within 3 years with the aim of achieving a journey time of c.a. 5 hours (plus interchange), complementing existing T1/2 services and providing a better distinction between local and regional/long distance travel.

Rail options, whilst offering shorter journey times were very costly to develop and implement (a N-S light rail scheme is likely to cost Circa £2Bn) and would take over 10 years to deliver. Therefore, these are all difficult to realise, even as a light rail scheme. The case for Bangor – Caernarfon/Afon Wen was stronger due to shorter route length and higher demand. It was recommended to take further steps to protect the former route from further development where practicable to do so.

10. Net zero energy company

Commitment: Net zero energy company – Work towards the creation of Ynni Cymru, a publicly-owned energy company for Wales, over the next two years, to expand community-owned renewable energy generation.

The establishment of Ynni Cymru was announced in August in [a joint press release](#) issued by the Minister for Climate Change, Julie James MS, and Plaid Cymru’s Designated Member Siân Gwenllïan MS.

The announcement said the organisation was being established “to expand community-owned renewable energy generation across Wales”. It said £750,000 had been allocated to 11 projects “in the form of resource grants over the next three years”. A Welsh Government [freedom of information response](#) provided further details on the 11 schemes.

Alongside Ynni Cymru, in October 2022, the Welsh Government [committed to establish](#) a large scale renewable energy developer, focused particularly on on-shore wind on the Welsh Government’s woodland estate. Surplus funds generated through the developer would be reinvested in improving energy efficiency in Welsh homes, and in “creating good quality, home grown, clean energy jobs”. The [Welsh Government website](#) says the developer will be established by April 2024.

It is unclear how Ynni Cymru will work with the large scale renewable developer.

The Minister for Climate Change highlighted to the [Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee in January](#) that Ynni Cymru and the state owned energy developer are “focusing on very different parts of the sector”. She explained that Ynni Cymru is “much more in the community, domestic, farm business type parts”.

11. Senedd reform

Commitment: Senedd Reform – Support plans to reform the Senedd, based on 80 to 100 Members; a voting system, which is as proportional – or more – than the current one and have gender quotas in law. Support the work of the Senedd Special Purpose Committee and introduce a Senedd reform Bill 12 to 18 months after it reports.

Work on Senedd reform has been ongoing for a number of years. In 2017, the **Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform** made **recommendations** about the size of the Senedd and how Members should be elected. Its recommendations were subsequently considered by the **Committee on Senedd Electoral Reform** (CSER), which **reported** in September 2020.

The **Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform** was established in October 2021 to come up with proposals to be included in a Welsh Government Bill. The Committee **reported** in May 2022 and made a number of recommendations, which included increasing the size of the Senedd to 96 Members, that a **closed list** proportional representation system be used to elect Members, and that measures be introduced to encourage the election of a more diverse Senedd.

In the build up to the Committee publishing its final report, the First Minister and the former Leader of Plaid Cymru, Adam Price MS, issued a **joint position statement** on Senedd reform. The **Chair of the Special Purpose Committee** has said this joint position statement “helped inform the Committee’s discussions” and was “considered with equal weight as other evidence provided to the Committee”.

In September 2023, the **Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill** was introduced into the Senedd. The Bill is the first of **two pieces of primary legislation** that the Welsh Government intends to use to take forward the recommendations of the Special Purpose Committee.

The Bill proposes to increase the number of Members of the Senedd to 96, introduce a closed-list proportional representation electoral system, return to four-year Senedd terms and establish a boundary review process for Senedd constituencies. It also proposes changes to the maximum number of Deputy Presiding Officers and Welsh Ministers that can be appointed, and would make it a requirement for candidates seeking election to the Senedd and Members of the Senedd to be registered to vote in Wales.

The second Bill is expected to take forward some of the Special Purpose Committee's recommendations regarding improving diversity in the Senedd. It was due to be introduced on 4 December and the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership had been due to make a **statement in Plenary on 5 December**. The Welsh Government said in September in the **Explanatory Memorandum** to the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill that the second Bill will make provision for gender quotas and the publication of diversity information in respect of Senedd candidates in forthcoming legislation. As recently **reported**, the introduction of this Bill has been postponed.

12. National School for Government

Commitment: National School for Government – Explore how setting up a National School for Government might contribute to the principle of a One Wales Public Service.

Since the Co-operation Agreement was published, there has been little information placed in the public domain regarding progress on setting up a National School for Government.

In response to a **written question** in December 2021, the Minister for Finance and Local Government, Rebecca Evans MS, stated that the vision of a 'One Welsh Public Service' is a long-standing aim of the Welsh Government. She stated that building on research conducted in 2018, Academi Wales would be exploring the potential for a National School for Government "considering areas related to world class governance, governing small and bilingual nations, public administration and research and development in leading edge public services".

Responding to a further **written question** tabled in November 2022, the Minister said that between March and November 2022, Government officials had "carried out early scoping work" on the project. She added that "engagement work with key stakeholders to assess demand and consider options" was planned for early 2023, "while recognising the current financial climate".

However, since this response, there does not appear to be any further update relating to the setting up of the School.